

## Stop swiping, start talking: the rise and rise of the blind dating app

### Level 3: Advanced

#### 1 Warmer

a. What do you think singles should consider most when trying to find a potential partner? Add two of your own ideas. Then put the items in order of importance and discuss.

- \_\_\_ physical appearance
- \_\_\_ how much they have in common
- \_\_\_ how many criteria the other person meets
- \_\_\_ how easy it is to talk to the other person
- \_\_\_ nothing quantifiable, it's just chemistry
- \_\_\_ having the same political views or religious beliefs
- \_\_\_ how well they complement each other
- \_\_\_ how successful the other person is
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

b. How might an online dating app be useful (or not) considering the points above?

#### 2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

attraction	blurred	chemistry	compatible	counter	discrimination
downside	high-end	ice breaker	obscure	jeopardy	scammer

1. When something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is difficult to see it clearly.
2. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is something that you say or do to make people feel more relaxed at a party or other social event.
3. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is a disadvantage or negative aspect of something.
4. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to cover something so that it cannot be seen.
5. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to take action in order to oppose or stop something or reduce its negative effects.

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6. \_\_\_\_\_ is the unfair treatment of someone because of their religion, race, or other personal features.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ is the feeling of liking someone, especially in a sexual way.
8. People who are \_\_\_\_\_ are likely to have a good relationship because of having similar aspects.
9. If something is in \_\_\_\_\_, it is likely to be damaged or destroyed.
10. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who tries to cheat people, especially by tricking them into paying for non-existent goods or services.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ is the emotional relationship between people, especially when they are strongly attracted to each other.
12. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is more expensive and more advanced than other similar goods and services.

**b. Now use a different form of the words below to complete each sentence.**

attraction

chemistry

ice breaker

obscure

jeopardy

scammer

1. After we sat down, I asked her a silly question to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The models in the magazine are all extremely \_\_\_\_\_.
3. They are now facing arrest for \_\_\_\_\_ their clients and not offering a real service.
4. Some people think love is just a physical, \_\_\_\_\_ reaction.
5. He did not tell his friend about the incident because he did not want to \_\_\_\_\_ their relationship.
6. Nobody knew who she was. She was plucked from \_\_\_\_\_ and became famous overnight.

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***Call them crazy, but more and more online daters are choosing to start conversations without vetting each other's profile pictures. It's almost as if looks aren't the only thing that matters!***

**Leah Harper**

**08 November, 2022**

- 1 If speed dating mixed with blind dating sounds like your idea of hell, look away now. Ten years since dating app Tinder first encouraged users to swipe through potential partners based largely on their looks, some singles are doing away with profile photos altogether. Those looking for love are turning instead to "blind dating apps" in the hope of making more meaningful connections.
- 2 Victoria Brown, a 26-year-old client success manager from east London, was already on traditional dating apps and was ready to try something new. Brown signed up to Blindlee, a blind dating app that hosts three-minute blurred video calls between users who match each other's criteria. In-app popups offer ice-breaker prompts and, as time goes on, the option to gradually unblur the video image. After three minutes, the app asks participants if they want to continue the conversation.
- 3 "We have seen there is a very high likelihood that people will continue chatting via messages or video because they've already had this ice-breaking moment," says Blindlee co-founder Sacha Nasan. The app launched in 2019 but experienced a boom during the pandemic when the average number of matches per user reportedly increased by almost 180%. It now has just under 50,000 registered users and is regularly compared to another popular TV dating show: Love Is Blind.
- 4 Nasan was single when he had the idea for Blindlee – but has since met his fiancée on the app. He was unhappy with how dating apps let you judge a book by its cover and wanted to flip the equation.
- 5 The downside? Blindlee requires both participants to be online at the same time. Ultimately, Brown never managed to make a connection.
- 6 It's a problem that may well be overcome by S'More, another relative newcomer to the digital dating market, where users' photos are obscured until 15 messages have been exchanged.
- 7 S'More launched in June, 2020 in the US, and is the country's fastest growing dating product. S'More's CEO, Adam Cohen-Aslatei puts the appeal of blind dating apps down to generation Z's behaviour. "Generation Z can see good-looking people on pretty much any social platform ... so they're much more interested in content," he says and adds that it's true for the dating space too.
- 8 There is also hope that blind dating apps could help counter prejudice and discrimination. "For ethnic and visible minorities, their experience on other apps can be diminished," says Cohen-Aslatei.
- 9 Dating and relationship consultant Dr Kathrine Bejanyan feels optimistic about the rise of apps that aren't so reliant on looks. "Physical attraction has its place, but blind dating apps mean you first give someone a chance based on who they are."
- 10 When Tyler Proctor, a 22-year-old executive assistant from Wellington, New Zealand, tried Tinder's Blind Date feature in March, 2022, he had trouble finding someone with whom he was compatible. "As a larger queer man in a smaller country, it's incredibly difficult to find dates so I use whatever I can to help," he says, "Unfortunately, I found I would sit on the matching screen for a long time and often gave up."
- 11 Although most blind dating apps do eventually reveal user identity before an in-person meeting, there is a certain sense of jeopardy that comes with not being able to see the person with whom you may be flirting.

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- 12 “It’s always about being smart and aware when you are online dating,” says Dr Hannah Shimko, communications and policy director at the Online Dating Association. “If you are having a video call with someone and their face is blurred out, obviously you need to be aware that it could be someone who is a scammer or being manipulative,” she points out.
- 13 For added reassurance, S’More claims to be “the first dating app in the world to verify that 100% of the users are real and not ‘catfishers’” using Amazon’s Rekognition software to confirm user identity.
- 14 Dr Bejanyan stresses that dating apps – blind or not – can never guarantee in-person chemistry. “There’s an essence and an energy about a person – the way they move, the way they speak – that can be communicated differently through technology versus real life,” she says.
- 15 Even so, she can see the apps’ potential for success. She previously worked at a high-end matchmaking agency where people were matched on criteria they asked for and not shown photos. “Interestingly, sometimes, when people met in real life, they said: ‘If I had seen a photo before, I wouldn’t have gone for them.’ Attraction is a lot more than how someone physically appears. I’m kind of excited about blind dating apps,” she says.

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First published in *The Guardian*, 08/11/2022

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#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Complete the summary with the correct options below.

Blind dating apps are becoming more popular among. Blindlee, one such app, hosts blurred video calls between users that 1. \_\_\_\_\_ based on criteria. It eventually offers participants the chance to unblur the video and to 2. \_\_\_\_\_, also optional. It has been compared to the dating show 3. \_\_\_\_\_.

The founder was single when he had the idea for the app and consequently met his fiancée on the app he built. Some users complain that it is difficult to 4. \_\_\_\_\_ because the app requires both users to be online simultaneously.

S'More, Blindlee's fastest growing competitor in the US, 5. \_\_\_\_\_ until 15 messages have been exchanged. Its CEO, Adam Cohen-Aslatei, believes that his app is very 6. \_\_\_\_\_ other apps.

Some people are concerned, however, that blind dating will draw scammers and catfishers. S'More uses Amazon's software to 7. \_\_\_\_\_, but users are still advised to stay smart.

While even honest people can come across very differently in person, as Dr Kathrine Bejanvan points out, 8. \_\_\_\_\_ is about a lot more than looks. She is not the only one who is 9. \_\_\_\_\_ blind dating apps.

- |                                 |                         |                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. a. match                     | b. pay                  | c. swipe            |
| 2. a. continue the conversation | b. exchange numbers     | c. start to match   |
| 3. a. Love Is Blind             | b. Rekognition          | c. S'More           |
| 4. a. choose a match            | b. commit               | c. make connections |
| 5. a. doesn't show numbers      | b. obscures profiles    | c. hides photos     |
| 6. a. different from            | b. comparable to        | c. identical to     |
| 7. a. check user locations      | b. verify user identity | c. stay invisible   |
| 8. a. attraction                | b. partnership          | c. success          |
| 9. a. optimistic about          | b. fed up of            | c. turning to       |

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#### 4 Key language

a. Match the words and phrases in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to form phrases.

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. good         | blind        |
| 2. love is      | over heels   |
| 3. judge a book | by its cover |
| 4. flip         | the equation |
| 5. head         | half         |
| 6. better       | looks        |

b. Choose three of the phrases above and write short definitions for them. Check your answers in a dictionary.

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#### 5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “Love is blind; when you’re in love, good looks are not that important.”
- “Blind dating is better because you don’t judge a book by its cover.”
- “A partner who is different from you makes a better match than someone who is too similar.”
- “Dating apps offer an overwhelming number of options, so finding a partner is now more challenging.”

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#### 6 In your own words

- a. Is finding love more difficult now than it was 10 or 20 years ago? Debate in small groups. Brainstorm arguments for and against. Your teacher will tell you if you are going to argue for or against the statement.
- b. Participate in the debate using some of the phrases below.

#### Expressing and supporting a point

*I'm positive / certain / convinced that ...*

*As far as I know, ...*

*By that, I mean ...*

*What I'm suggesting is ...*

*To be more specific, ...*

*I'd like to emphasize ...*

*An example of this is ...*

*The point I'm making is ...*

*I'd like to add something.*

#### Agreeing

*You're absolutely right. / Absolutely.*

*No doubt about it.*

*I couldn't agree with you more.*

#### Interrupting

*Can I just say that ...*

*I'd like to comment on that.*

*Can I add something here?*

*Is it okay if I jump in for a second?*

#### Disagreeing

*No, I don't think that's true because ...*

*I see your point, but ...*

*I'm sorry, but I have to disagree because ...*

*That's not always the case.*

*Not necessarily.*